



Michigan
Nurses
Association

An Affiliate of National Nurses United

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Dear members of the House Judiciary Committee:

We are writing to you **in support of House Bills 4209 and 4210**. Registered nurses recognize an urgent need to increase Michigan patients' access to safe, regulated medicinal marijuana, including healthier alternatives to smoking.

The Michigan Nurses Association commends Rep. Callton and Rep. Lyons for their leadership on this issue and thanks Rep. Kesto for taking up these bills in committee.

Many patients who rely on marijuana as medicine turn to it as a last resort when they or their children face severe illness. Medicinal marijuana is used successfully to relieve intractable pain, persistent nausea from chemotherapy, and other debilitating conditions.

Unfortunately, patients often encounter obstacles to benefitting from the life-saving option of using medicinal marijuana. These obstacles, which the legislation at hand aims to resolves, include:

- ☐ **Fear of prosecution.** While the voters approved medicinal marijuana, too many patients are hesitant to use this option because they may be treated as criminals, and indeed this has unfortunately happened in some cases. Medicinal marijuana should be addressed as a health issue, not a criminal matter.
- ☐ **Lack of a safe, clean environment in which to buy medicinal marijuana.** The current system's unreliability can sometimes force patients to scramble to obtain marijuana from undesirable sources. We believe we all would want our loved ones to have a safe, clean and regulated environment in which to obtain their medicine – one in which products are labeled and distributed with care. It is also important that patients can obtain their medicine from settings in which they are not exposed to unwanted marijuana smoke, which the legislation addresses.

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- ☐ **Reluctance to risk exposure to contamination.** This is a very real danger, especially for patients who are undergoing cancer treatment or are otherwise immunosuppressed. The presence of fungi, in particular, can cause respiratory problems in patients who choose to use the product as an inhalant. Nurses have seen patients suffer serious illness, to the point of admission to the ICU, from using medicinal marijuana that was either unintentionally contaminated or intentionally adulterated. Patients need some assurances that the product they are using is safe.

As you move forward, we urge you to consider the broadest regulations that are feasible in terms of product screening to ensure safety and efficacy.

- ☐ **Preference against smoking marijuana.** Many patients would prefer to use non-smokeable forms of marijuana, both for their own health and that of those around them. Regulating non-smokeable forms of marijuana for medicinal use and making them available in a safe, legal environment will help countless patients improve their quality of life. For some, it will increase their chances of survival altogether.

Nurses thank you for your attention to the urgent need to clarify Michigan's medical marijuana law in order to protect patients. Please feel free to contact MNA if we can be of any assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Dawn Kettinger
Director of Advocacy and Outreach
Michigan Nurses Association